

NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF A
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
47 NOTRE DAME/ALMADEN TOWER
MIXED USE HOUSING PROJECT

PROJECT APPLICANT: Almaden Tower Ventures, LLC

FILE NO: H04-050

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS: 259-35-024,025,047

As the Lead Agency, the City of San José will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the above-referenced Project and would like your views regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be addressed in the SEIR. This SEIR may be used by your agency when considering approvals for this project.

The project description, location, and probable environmental effects which will be analyzed in the SEIR for the project are attached.

According to State law, the deadline for your response is 30 days after receipt of this notice. However, we would appreciate an earlier response, if possible. Please identify a contact person, and send your response to:

City of San Jose
Attn: Michael Rhoades, Environmental Project Manager
City Hall Annex, Room 400
801 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95110-1795
Phone: (408) 277-4576

Stephen M. Haase
Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

Deputy

Date: November 1, 2004

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HOUSING PROJECT**

November 2004

Introduction

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment; to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts; and to consider alternatives to the project.

A Supplemental EIR (SEIR) is prepared when it is determined by the discretionary authority that changes proposed in an approved project will require revisions to the previous EIR because of possible new impacts or an increase in severity of previously identified impacts.

The proposed EIR will be a supplemental to the 1992 Downtown Strategy Plan EIR (and the subsequent 1998 Supplemental EIR) and will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. An Initial Study has been prepared (and will be incorporated in the SEIR as an appendix) to focus the SEIR on potentially significant issues pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15178. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the SEIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures for resource areas found to be potentially significant by the Initial Study;
- Alternatives to the project as proposed; and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; and (c) cumulative impacts.

Project Location and Description

The proposed project site is the former Tropicana Club property located at 25-47 Notre Dame Avenue and 220 Carlisle Street in Downtown San José. The 1.4 acre property is bounded by Almaden Boulevard to the west, Carlisle Street to the north, Notre Dame Street to the east, and West Santa Clara Street to the south. The project site occupies a portion of the West Santa Clara Street frontage; the remainder of the block's frontage (not a part of the site) is developed with the De Anza Hotel City Landmark.

The site is currently developed with paved parking lots and two single-story buildings; a

warehouse and the former Tropicana Club [formerly Palomar Ballroom, a circa 1946 dance hall]. Both of the buildings on the site are currently vacant.

Phase I of the project proposes to remove the existing buildings and construct an approximately 22-story, 311-unit residential condominium on the northwest corner of the property.

Approximately 5,000 square feet of commercial space is proposed on the Almaden Boulevard frontage, contained within four live/work units. A sales office of approximately 1,000 square feet is proposed at the southeast corner of Almaden Boulevard and Carlisle Street. A five-level parking garage (two levels below ground and three levels above ground) would be built adjacent to the buildings on the northeast corner of the site. Atop the third above-ground parking level, common open space for the residential occupants is proposed.

Phase II of the project, covering the southwest corner of the site, adjacent to the De Anza Hotel, would be developed with a mixed-use commercial/residential building of approximately six stories (plus two below-grade parking levels). This second structure would total approximately 60,000 square feet and would provide approximately 28 additional residential units.

Approximately 8,000 square feet would be ground floor retail/commercial uses, and two sub-grade parking levels would connect to those developed in Phase I.

Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project

The SEIR will identify the significant environmental effects anticipated to result from development of the project as proposed. The SEIR will include at least the following specific environmental categories as related to the proposed project:

1. Land Use

The project site is located in Downtown San José surrounded by parking garages, high rise office buildings and the De Anza Hotel City Landmark. The SEIR will describe the existing land uses adjacent to and within the project area. Land use impacts which would occur as a result of the proposed project will be described, including the compatibility of the proposed and existing land uses in the project area. Mitigation measures will be identified for potential significant impacts, as warranted.

2. Transportation and Circulation

The project site is located in the Downtown Core area of San José, and as can be expected, existing roadway volumes in the project area are high. The SEIR will examine the existing traffic conditions in the immediate vicinity of the project site. This SEIR will verify and document that the overall traffic generated by the mixed use/residential project has already been evaluated with the 1998 Downtown Strategy Plan Supplemental EIR. . This SEIR will also address project specific access and circulation impacts. Mitigation measures will be identified for potential significant impacts, as warranted.

3. Noise

The major noise sources in the project area are airplanes approaching the Norman Y. Mineta San José International Airport, and automobile traffic from surface streets and Highway 87. The SEIR will discuss the potential of the proposed project to be impacted by the existing noise levels on the project site. The SEIR will also discuss the increase in traffic noise that

would result from implementation of the proposed project and temporary construction noise. Noise levels will be evaluated for consistency with applicable standards and guidelines in the City of San José. Mitigation measures will be identified for potential significant impacts, as warranted.

4. Cultural Resources

The project site is located in an area of high archaeological and historical sensitivity. The SEIR will address the known presence of historic and archaeological sites in the project area and the potential for subsurface cultural resources to be found during construction. The SEIR will also address the historical significance of the Tropicana Club, which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The significance of this structure is based upon its association with Mexican American history in San Jose. The SEIR will also examine the effect that the proposed project will have on the adjacent City Landmark, the De Anza Hotel. Mitigation measures will be identified for potential significant impacts, as warranted.

5. Hazardous Materials

The project site is located in an area surrounded by commercial businesses and offices. The EIR will summarize known hazardous materials conditions on and adjacent to the project site, and address the potential for future residential development on this site to result in a hazardous materials impact. Asbestos and lead based paint may be present in the existing structures that are proposed for demolition. Mitigation measures will be identified for potential significant impacts, as warranted.

6. Alternatives

The SEIR will examine alternatives to the proposed project including a “No Project” alternative and at least two alternative development scenarios. Alternatives discussed will be chosen on their ability to reduce or avoid identified significant impacts of the proposed project while achieving most of the objectives of the project proponent.

7. Significant Unavoidable Impacts

The SEIR will identify those impacts that cannot be avoided, if the project is implemented as proposed.

8. Cumulative Impacts

The SEIR will include a Cumulative Impacts section which will address the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the project when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area. This section will cover all subject areas discussed in the SEIR (e.g., traffic, cultural resources, etc.) and will specify which of the areas are anticipated to experience significant cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts will be discussed qualitatively, unless specific quantitative information on other pending projects is available prior to publication of the Draft SEIR.